

Your newsletter for tutors, volunteers, and compassionate lovers of literacy.

GED HOPEFULS DISCOVER MATH LITERACY, AND TRIUMPH

New math class helps Gladys and Fatima start on the path to their GED.

Banana prices had been dropping in Dominica for years, putting pressure on local farmers like Gladys' family. Gladys often had to stop her schooling to help her family get by. "Sometimes there were things... moneywise... you had to leave school," she recalls. Now, living in Houston, Gladys dreams of finally earning her GED Certification and becoming a nurse.

Literacy is no longer just about reading and writing. Math skills are a key component of full literacy.

But Gladys needs help with basic math skills to make up for time lost in high school. Now, thanks to the support of friends like you, she has found that help. This summer Gladys enrolled in Literacy Advance's newest math literacy class, a trial expansion of our Adult Basic Education program.

Mindy, a former high school teacher and the class tutor, began the class by working with each student to assess their personal goals. Some students want help with the most fundamental numeracy skills – like counting money and



Gladys is all smiles in her math class. Your generous support means she'll get the help she needs to pass the GED and become a nurse.

making change. Others, like Gladys and her classmate Fatima, want to pass the GED and need help with subjects like algebra and geometry.

"You can come and have a better life," says Gladys about the classes offered at Literacy Advance.

GED prep classes aren't always the best starting point for adult students. Fatima told her tutor she struggled to keep up with the fast pace and level of skill required. The math classes you help provide at Literacy Advance let students set their own pace – a strategy for success. We'll soon see two new proud GED graduates, thanks to the hard work of the learners, their wonderful tutors, and great friends like you!

Are you tutoring a student interested in the GED?

Here's what you need to know...

Major overhaul – In January, the GED will be overhauled for the first time since 2002. Writing skills will be incorporated into all segments except math.

Computer testing – All GED tests will be administered on the computer. Literacy Advance learners can practice their computer skills in our free computer classes, and through independent study in the computer labs at Wilcrest and the Bay Area location.

Scores won't transfer – Anyone partially finished with the 2002 series GED must complete the test by December 15, 2013 or start over in 2014.

LITERACY ADVANCE CELEBRATES ITS 50TH YEAR!

You've helped provide free literacy classes to Houston adults for 50 incredible years! Check out page 3 for all the ways you can join us in celebrating our learners and their supporters (that's you!) next year...

Dear Friends of Literacy,

When most of us start off as adults, we don't know exactly where we're headed. If we are fortunate enough, then we might know which direction we're going, but certainly not how to get there. We make it up along the way, adding friends, tools, and family as we navigate around obstacles and push up mountains to reach our destination. The most fortunate of us have a compass to guide us.

This holiday season, as we count our blessings, we are most thankful for you and your shining compasses! For fifty years, it has been your mentorship, support, and encouragement that have served as due north for our students. Your unfaltering dedication provides new options for students like Gladys (page 1), gives chances to families like Ledisi's (this page), and re-routes futures for students like Carlos (page 4).

Our students reach their highest aspirations because you have stepped forward and said, "Follow me. I may not always know where I'm going, but I will be sure to help you reach your next stop and beyond."

For that, and so much more, we are blessed to have you as part of our Literacy Advance family!

Melanie

Melanie Fisk, MSW, MBA
Executive Director



LEDISI'S LITERACY SKILLS HAVE LIFELONG IMPACT

From finding a job to becoming a U.S. citizen, improving his English literacy was the key for Ledisi.



Larry Dierker is not only a former Houston Astros pitcher and manager, he is also the tutor who changed Ledisi's life forever.

Many of the 1,200+ volunteer hours that Larry has logged at Literacy Advance over the years he spent working with Ledisi to improve Ledisi's English reading and writing skills.

Literacy Advance alum Ledisi learned to read and write in English thanks to his tutor, Larry Dierker, and your support.

Now, like many of our other students, Ledisi's life has been forever transformed. Thanks to Literacy Advance, Ledisi was able to get his citizenship and become a full U.S. citizen. Now he is a machinist at a local manufacturing company, and is able to provide for his wife and three sons.

The literacy skills that Ledisi learned have made a profound impact on his life, and he is now able to live out his personal dreams. His family and children are better-off and more likely to succeed.

You too can volunteer and help change a life. Find out more at www.literacyadvance.org/volunteer.

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THANK YOU!

**This holiday season,
we are grateful for
you - our dedicated
tutors and supporters -
for the work you do to
transform lives daily.**



We're worth following!
www.twitter.com/LiteracyAdvance



Have you LIKED us yet?
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From the cover...

LITERACY ADVANCE TURNS 50 IN 2014, JOIN US TO CELEBRATE AT GOLF AND SCRABBLE NEXT YEAR!

You have helped provide the joy of literacy to tens of thousands of Houston adults since 1964. As we continue to expand, we're taking time in 2014 to celebrate your many successes!

As we approach 2014, Literacy Advance is excited to kick off our golden anniversary. For 50 years, volunteer tutors and compassionate supporters like you have brought the joy of literacy to thousands upon thousands of Houstonians.

You've helped people learn to read, to write, to speak English, to earn their citizenship, to get jobs, to count money, to take care of their families, and to build better lives for themselves. Thank you!

Yet there are still so many in need. For them, Literacy Advance will continue to focus on the basic, immediate literacy needs of our learners with classes and services designed around their individual goals. And we're expanding the work we already do for long-term learner success.

This means more Family Literacy Nights for parents. It means increased work readiness classes for job seekers. And it means a commitment to our transition services, which help learners navigate their next steps after Literacy Advance.

Learn more about our 50th anniversary plans by visiting our website at www.literacyadvance.org/events.

S₁ C₂ R₁ A₁ B₃ B₃ L₂ E₁ | I₁ S₁ | B₃ A₁ C₂ K₃

Scrabble and the City is back with a vengeance! Will you be ready? Next year's event will be held on **Thursday, June 12, 2014** at Saint Arnold Brewing Company.

Your rival teams are already planning their costumes, and studying up on their vocabulary. It will be a day of fierce competition, grand prizes, and outrageous costume contests.

It's all a part of celebrating the joy of literacy you make possible every day, and raising money to keep the cause alive.

For more information, please contact Literacy Advance's Development Director Josh Beasley at jbeasley@literacyadvance.org or 713.266.8777.

You can always visit our Online Events page at www.literacyadvance.org/events.



READER CUP MOVES TO TOPGOLF IN 2014

Not just for golf pros, the 2014 Reader Cup Tournament in honor of Larry & Judy Dierker is designed for everyone.

We're doing things a little different next year. In 2014, we're honoring Larry & Judy Dierker for their tireless advocacy for Literacy Advance over the years. And we want you to join us!



The new venue will be fun for Literacy Advance supporters, and Dierker fans, regardless of your golf abilities or experience.

Join us **Thursday, February 20, 2014** at TopGolf Houston. Team sponsorships are available now! Contact Josh Beasley for details at 713.266.8777 or by email at jbeasley@literacyadvance.org.

You can read more about Larry Dierker's work at Literacy Advance. Check out Ledisi's story on page 2.

Scrabble and the City is on for 2014. You can be a part of the fun, and help more than 1,500 adults gain fundamental literacy skills each year.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION – CARLOS GOT A NEW JOB!

Pairing Literacy Advance services gave Carlos the tools he needed to find a new job. Can you say “success?”

Each year, Carlos faced the same uncertainty. How was he going to make ends meet during the slow months of his seasonal job? Could he survive another summer? Without long-term stability, Carlos was unsure of his future. He knew he needed a new job, but first he needed to learn English and gain the computer skills required to fill out online applications.

Carlos moved to the United States from El Salvador in 2003. He found catering work at a local hotel. It didn't require any English, but it also didn't pay much in the summer. Carlos began taking English classes at a private school, but couldn't afford the cost. Finally, a friend told him about Literacy Advance.

More than one-third of Literacy Advance students identify computer skills as their top reason for seeking literacy services.

Carlos began coming to Literacy Advance about two years ago, and has taken just about every class offered. He started with basic English as a Second Language, and then moved on to work readiness and computer classes. In his work readiness class, Carlos practiced his interviewing skills and learned to use a computer. His English grew stronger and stronger as he continued to practice.

When he saw a full-time job opening at a major retail chain, one requiring daily interaction with customers in English, he felt it was time. He met with the Literacy Advance



A look of pride. Literacy Advance learner, Carlos, is confident knowing that he nailed his job interview – in English – and got the job!

Transition Coach, Diana. She helped Carlos work through the lengthy online application process using his newfound English language skills and the computer literacy skills he'd developed.

“When somebody talks to me at my job, I feel comfortable now,” – Carlos, learner

During his interview, Carlos was comfortable and confident speaking in English. Thanks to the support of friends like you, Carlos nailed the interview and got the job. Now his future in Houston looks stable and bright.

WILL YOU HELP OTHER LEARNERS LIKE CARLOS?

Your generous support will help more than 1,500 adults each year find jobs, acquire crucial computer skills, and become better parents through the power of literacy. Simply send in your donation today.



This holiday season, you can give someone like Carlos the gift of literacy.

YES! I want to give the gift of literacy today!

\$50 _____ \$25 _____ \$10 _____ Other _____

_____ I have enclosed a check made out to Literacy Advance.

_____ I will give online at www.literacyadvance.org/give.

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